



Winter 2004

## The Forum: Winter 2004

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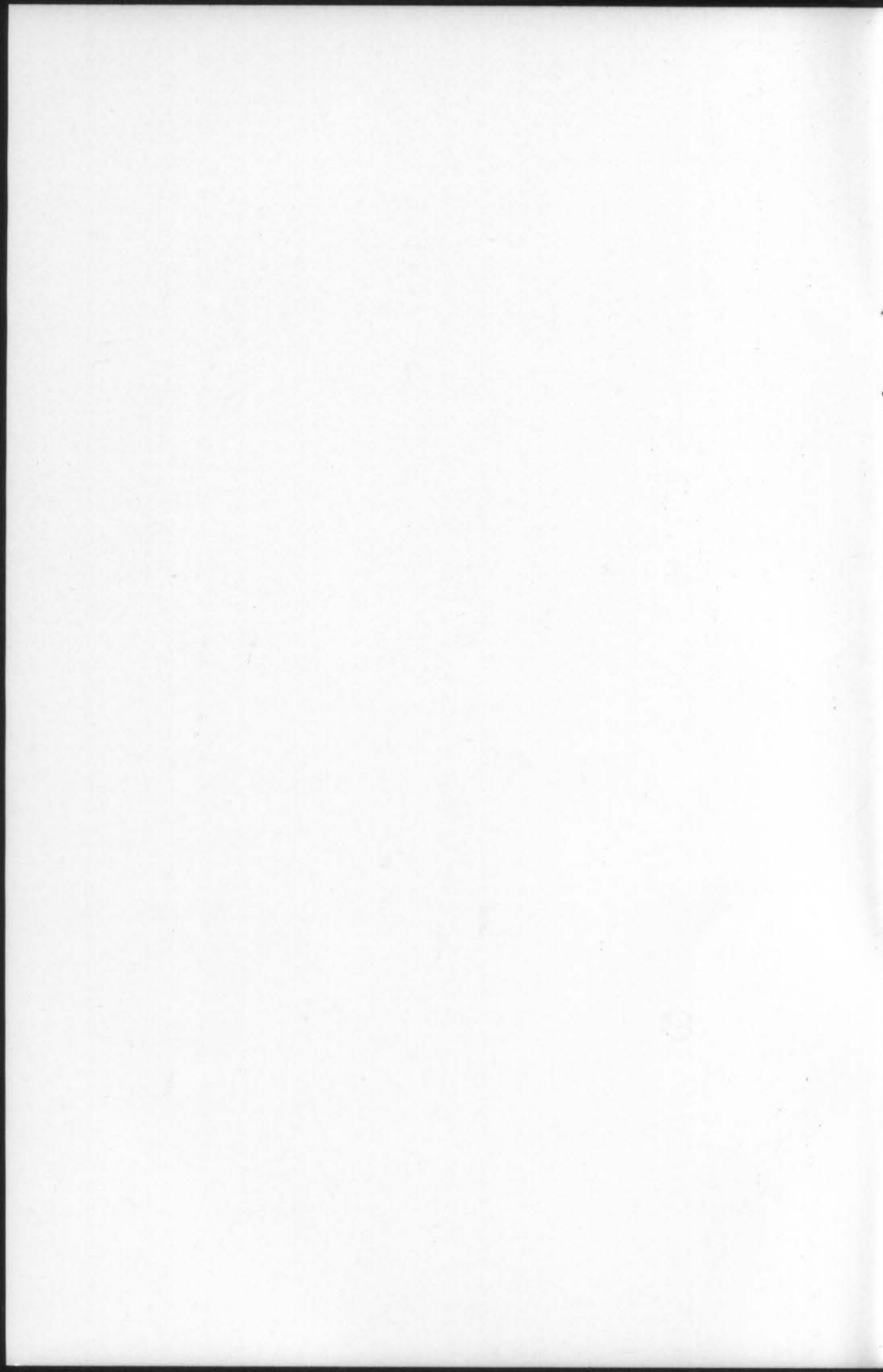
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# the Forum

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## Tessa Sandstrom

### *Small Gestures*

The old Ford rattled over the gravel roads as they drove home. She looked over at her brother. His dark shaggy hair nearly covered his eyes and his mouth hung open as he stared at the road. "Bobby?"

"Yeah."

"Thanks for comin' and gettin' me."

"Yeah."

She looked back to the road then fidgeted with the radio, trying to get a station to come in. Soon she caught an oldies radio station, but it was fuzzy again before she could sit back. "Damn it! I like that song." She looked back over at her brother. When they were little, they used to be really close because they were only a year apart in age. People often thought they were twins because they both had the dark wavy hair, dark complexion, and small build. "Bobby?"

"Yeah."

"Why didn't you come out tonight?"

"I dunno."

She studied her brother again, wondering what he was thinking and turned back to the road. He was always so quiet and it was hard to have a conversation with him, even though they'd been through a lot together. She let out a crude laugh as she thought of the night they got thrown in jail together. Bobby looked at her with a crooked smile on his face.

"What the hell are you laughing at?"

"The night ol' Sammy threw us in jail."

"Heh."

"Yeah. At least you were drunk, I'd only had one. Couldn't he have waited a while so I could have made it worth it?" He nodded his head slightly and they both turned their gazes back to the road as the old Ford pulled into the yard. "Bobby?"

"Yeah?"

"Tammy hates me. She's been threatening me."

"Why?"

"Because I'm seeing Ryan." Bobby was quiet and shook his head.

"Frickin' girls."

"I know Bobby, but seriously."

"Don't worry, little sister. You know I'll always have your back." He reached over and roughly tousled her hair.

"Thanks," she said. It was always the small things that made her love that kid. She always wanted to tell him how much she loved him, but she always felt too stupid. He nearly died two years ago in a car accident, and even then she was too scared to tell him. But as she walked into the house, she saw the picture she took with him in Germany and got the urge again to tell him she loved him.

"Bobby?"

"Yeah." She looked at him as they walked up the stairs and blushed bright red. She looked back down at her shoes, then turned down the hallway towards bed. "Never mind." Bobby stood there and watched her go into her bedroom, then shook his head with that crooked smirk on his face as he turned into his room, murmuring, "God, I love that kid."



Jeremy Bold

---

*Man's Great Painted Flowers*

a ll the Signs aligned against green and pale  
hulking bright in light over earth in veil  
hard black palls cast down onto faltering leaves  
iron stilts stuck in brown ground like stiff hollow trees  
CAR  
BAR  
CASINO  
all scar  
they are normal to hardened eyes  
but look at this new site  
unusual, unbordered, wide and tight  
uncommon, uncolored, dark and light  
just one word can hide all these skies  
the letters black as blight  
"Smile." it says in sarcastic style  
one huge word, fat with guilt and guile

This example of our empty pleasure  
Thrown in the ground at passing leisure  
One in the rows of man's great painted flowers  
Stuck in like needles, the tall gross towers



*Beth Eslinger*

## Amanda Licht

---

### *Rebel Yell!*

**T**he mention of Henry David Thoreau conjures calm ideas of harmony, a peaceful pond, a quiet thinker, a philosophy of nonviolent resistance. The veneer of education which gives a refined polish to his essays definitely purports this side of the man, but there's more to Mr. Thoreau than these often cited qualities. Though his ideals fit safely within the gamut of traditional American thought, Thoreau's radical tendencies show in the extent to which he recommended realizing his ideals and the methods he condoned for their realization. Beneath his civilized tone there is an edge to the famous naturalist's message, an edge that resurfaced in American politics without the domestication of artful language or the damper of age.

Thoreau followed a great tradition in American political writing when he opened his famous essay of 1849, "Civil Disobedience," with a discourse on the evils of government. In 1776, Thomas Paine, himself a critical proponent of democracy, wrote in his pamphlet *Common Sense*:

...government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer or are exposed to the same miseries by a government, which we might expect in a country without government, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise.

Paine acknowledged the necessity of government to regulate the security of a community, seeing as clearly as James Madison that "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." Thoreau stepped beyond the traditionally pragmatic view of American political theorists by disputing that claim. "I heartily accept the motto, - 'That government is best which governs least,'" he wrote,

and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe, - "That government is best which governs not at all;" and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of gov-

ernment which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient.

Though Thoreau wished the demise of the system, he functioned within it by moderating his radical ideas. He carefully avoided association with any "no-government men," and remarked, "I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government." Earlier thinkers, Thoreau implied, underestimated the nature of government to restrain its citizens. While Paine and Madison imagined the evils of government would be minimized by a new democratic system, Thoreau, enduring the results of the experiment, rejected the hypothesis:

This American government,- what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will....

...a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it.

Thoreau proposed a better system, based on the conscience of individuals rather than the inertia of a majority, absent of the cumbersome and unjust laws of government. He saw in himself a morality to supercede legality, a Higher Law which demanded allegiance. "It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law," he explained, "so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right." Higher Law, defined as the explicit domain of individual morality, is a vital, repetitive theme in Thoreau's writing. In *Slavery in Massachusetts*, Thoreau used the idea of Higher Law to denounce all law-based defenses of slavery thus:

In important moral and vital questions like this, it is just as impertinent to ask whether a law is constitutional or not, as to ask whether it is profitable or not....The question is not whether you or your grandfather, seventy years ago, did not enter into an agreement to serve the devil, and that service is not accordingly now due; but whether you will not now, for once and at last, serve God, - in spite of your own past recreancy, or that of your ancestor, - by obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION which He, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being.

The affinity for Higher Law, as Thoreau understood it, failed to pass from the individual into an aggregated government. Therefore, responsibil-

ity to this pure morality fell on each individual citizen. "Moreover," he insisted, "any man more right than his neighbors, constitutes a majority of one already." Anyone confronted with a law that contradicts an internal sense of right, according to Thoreau, faces the obligation to openly disregard that law. "Cast your whole vote," Thoreau said,

not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight.

Little worry should be directed at the response of the state when the cause of resistance is just: "It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State, than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case."

From this point, the connection of Thoreau's ideas to the philosophy of more recent American activists, specifically Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is apparent. The processes of nonviolent resistance outlined in King's Letter from Birmingham Jail, elaborate on the themes of "Civil Disobedience": "In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action." Organizing the black community for "direct action," sit-ins, boycotts, marches etc., embodies Thoreau's call for minorities to impede the mechanics of the government, to "clog by its whole weight" the economic and police apparatus of each targeted city. Direct action has the added benefit, Thoreau would probably concede, of functioning outside of the regular political system. Before the first round of civil rights struggles for African-Americans, Thoreau wrote,

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government which is the slave's government also.

King's methods aspired to Higher Law as well, infusing the civil rights debate with Christian values by citing an even earlier source of the principle: "I would agree with St. Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at all'." Laws can be unjust in three ways, according to King's definition: by degrading a minority group; by regulating a minority denied representation in government; by application of the statute to hurt a minority. Any one of these conditions justify disregarding the laws, and exposing their moral ille-



gality, but King saw every one in practice against the blacks of the South.

Thoreau, no doubt, would find King's stand morally just and admirable. However, he might also find elements of King's methodology needlessly masochistic and considerate of the government and white power structure. *Walden Pond* gives a fuzzy-edged, romanticized feel to Thoreau's ideas on the world, but some less-often quoted sections of his more direct political essays counter this image.

The first hint, lies in the opening of "Civil Disobedience" as quoted earlier: "'That government is best which governs not at all;' and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will Have." Whereas traditional American ideas held that government should stay out of the way as much as possible, Thoreau proposed that eventually government should stay out of the way entirely, allowing the people to function freely on the basis of Higher Law as interpreted by each conscience. And even in the interim while the people prepared for such freedom, he defied the power of the state unequivocally:

...the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breath after my own fashion. Let us see who is strongest. What force has multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I.

Such sentiments throw doubt on the common assumption of Thoreau's peaceful convictions. A more direct contradiction lies in his essay "A Plea for Captain John Brown," in which he glorifies the abolitionist's attack on Harper's Ferry. While King asked, "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?", Thoreau wrote:

I do not wish to kill nor to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both these things would be by me unavoidable. We preserve the so-called peace of our community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment!

And of the violence on Harper's Ferry specifically, Thoreau said, "I think that for once the Sharpe's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them."

In light of these ideas, it seems that Dr. King found a doctrine nonviolent resistance in the works of the celebrated naturalist despite Thoreau rather than through Thoreau. An alternate mirror of Thoreau's ideas in the 1960s could be found in Malcolm X, a man generally defined as extremist, militant and dangerous. X challenged blacks to use "the ballot or the bul-

let" interchangeably. "I believe in action on all fronts by whatever means necessary,":

Any time you demonstrate against segregation and a man has the audacity to put a police dog on you, kill that dog, kill him. ... I don't mean go out and get violent; but at the same time you should never be nonviolent unless you run into some nonviolence. I'm nonviolent with those who are nonviolent with me. But when you drop that violence on me, then you've made me go insane, and I'm not responsible for what I do. And that's the way every Negro should get. Any time you know you're within the law, within your legal rights, within your moral rights, in accord with justice, then die for what you believe in. But don't die alone. Let your dying be reciprocal. This is what is meant by equality.

And Thoreau, scorning the average man in comparison to the executed John Brown:

Do you think that you are going to die, sir? No! There's no hope of you. You haven't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school. We make a needless ado about capital punishment- taking lives, when there is no life to take. Memento mori! We don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. We've interpreted it in a groveling and sniveling sense; we've wholly forgotten how to die.

As with all our great thinkers, Americans gleaned what they chose to from Thoreau's writings, scrupulously disregarding any comments that might wax too radical. Thoreau's life might not have packed the punch that Malcolm X's did, but he doesn't live up to Dr. King's standards either. His message influenced both activists though, confirming his ultimate emphasis on action. Any politics that could satisfy Thoreau's sensibilities must highlight the individual's responsibility to act on moral issues. His current supporters draw upon the more peaceful side of Thoreau's written legacy, because his willingness to disregard authority and acknowledge the utility of violence in political affairs conflicts with most modern day ideas of acceptable behavior. They have, perhaps, misinterpreted the "civil" in Civil Disobedience, employing its meaning as "polite" rather than "public." But Thoreau was more than a quiet thinker by a peaceful pond in Massachusetts; when approached with fresh eyes, his political essays burn with righteous conviction and individuality. In his own way, Thoreau stood against the tide of complacency at a revolutionary time in our history, and his radical words, express a spirit that is undeniably American: "If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so, a man."

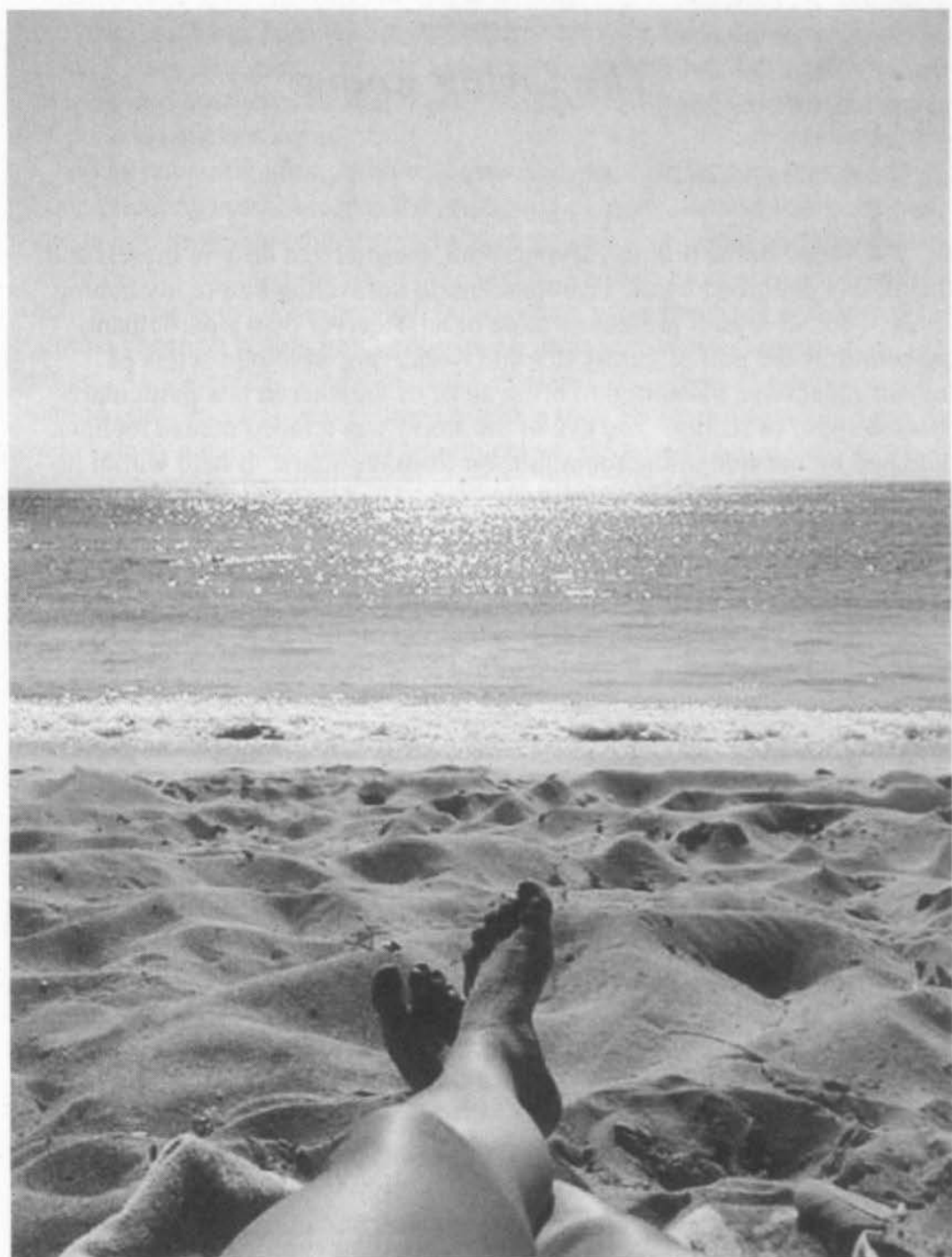
Elizabeth Blazek

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*Death of a Longboarder*

In a flex of muscle, in the glint of steel,  
In the smooth flow of water over its rise and fall, a wave, a man, a woman.  
How is it that a human can ride, we can defy our deepest law,  
that of gravity.  
The break that breathes us in swallows us whole, yet allows us to  
transcend gravity for a flinch in time.  
I walk on water with the envy of Christ in my eye.





*Beth Eslinger*

Katie Rau

---

## *The Living Room*

I stood in the ordinary living room, mesmerized despite myself and helplessly disturbed by the chaotic scenario unraveling before my gaping eyes. I found myself present as more of an observer than a participant, unbound by the pull of family ties and wondering what odd series of events must have transpired to bring all of us together in this particularly heated spiral of reality. The eye of the storm was a faded mauve recliner situated on the side of the room farthest from the stairs. It held within its clutches the writhing body of a dying man. The rest of us, standing in our semi-circle of awe, were each coming to realize that mortality's sweetest kiss could meet our own lush, life-filled lips at any time. We watched in calculated and checked horror at what disease could do, secretly reveling in our sanctuaries of health, quietly making promises to all things holy and beyond in exchange for a shot at life-long emancipation from illness. Wild contracts were indeed made with higher powers in those awkward minutes so that the groaning figure in the chair would never be one of us. And yet disease was already one of us. He was a father, grandfather, husband and friend. And he was dying in front of our widely opened, glistening, and fearful eyes.

A lightly colored wood TV tray had been stationed next to the worn out chair. Its job, once to support quickly prepared meals and beers for the games he loved so dearly, had been transformed into a repository of vials, plastic baggies, syringes, and wet cloths. The brown, shaggy throw rug under the wobbly table was held captive in the lumpy shadow of the man-chair beast, littered with empty saline tubes, resting where their trajectories intercepted the sea of neatly vacuumed yarn. It looked like a war zone, only instead of uniforms cloaking our bodies, we were all naked and exposed to the bullets of reality that incessantly impaled our vulnerable flesh, penetrating our souls.

I was not quite a virgin in difficult medical situations, having dealt with illness in the emergency room as a volunteer, but there was certainly an unmistakable element of newness in this late afternoon hour. This was not a hospital. There were no sterile, whitened walls emanating the "hospital" smell that I knew so well, only carefully hung family photos, doilies under all of the table decorations and lovingly waxed hard wood

floors beneath the feet of the onlookers in the adjacent dining room. Death had never felt so close, and I had never felt so helpless. As the chair lurched once again in response to his tensing, tired muscles, I felt the wetness well up from deep within its hidden reservoirs beneath my paling skin. I knew that everyone else's eyes were clouded too, but couldn't dare to look into another's for fear that they might see through my tough veneer of pre-med student armor.

The attending nurse, who was also the man's eldest daughter, had been injecting morphine into the implanted IV port. It stood like a loathed statue of a repressive dictator. The skin around it was tight and slightly more discolored than the rest of the sagging yellow-hued skin clinging to his swelling body. Exasperated, his daughter crouched back on her heels, almost kneeling beside him as she threw down yet another emptied syringe. As I watched, I attempted to calculate the amount of morphine she had already injected, and I came up with a total of 13 milliliters. To me it was simply a number, neutral and objective, because I lacked the knowledge concerning the concentration of the drug or the recommended dosage in the first place. It was her quivering hands and exhausted expression that began to scare me. She had been caring for him over a week now, mostly on her own. The line that demarcates professional distance from personal involvement had long since been crossed, and the nurse portion of the woman was nearly destroyed. With tears in her eyes, she quickly fumbled through the growing patch of medications on the TV tray, looking for the syringe marked "flush" to administer following the morphine injection. Confused by the sheer number of bottles and tubes, her gaze darted upward, first to her brother, and then to her mother for an answer. She received only lost and disgusted, yet understanding looks. I winced as her eyes fell on me.

"How much have I given him?" she asked.

Slowly finding my voice I replied, "13 mLs so far, I think."

Turning to her father she asked forcefully, "Dad. Pain scale of 1 to 10. How bad is it?"

The reply was muffled and unintelligible.

"Well, then we'll give him some more. He's in pain. Isn't he? Just look at him. He can't even tell us how bad it is. I'll give him more," she said.

Suddenly, I was truly frightened. We were all there, just spectators in this grandiose play of life. No one was really moving from their positions, just standing there nodding heads in feigned agreement and murmuring "um hum." As his daughter located the concentrated morphine solution and successfully sucked up more into the syringe, despite her trembling hands and body, I watched in a helpless type of horror. "How much was too much? Should I say something? This isn't even my family. Should I

try to help her? Calm her down? Call someone? What if she injects too much? Is she really stable enough to be doing this right now? As if any of us are stable right now..." I thought. I just didn't know. I had had no idea I would be faced with something like this. And as the man moaned again from his beloved recliner, his daughter injected more morphine, 5 mLs, into his body. I felt my skin prickle and my heart ache. The scene laid out in front of me was so unimaginably terrifying, yet somehow just as it should be when someone is dying. His whimpering wife sat next to him in a folding chair, lovingly holding his hand and stroking what was left of his wonderful black hair away from his eyes.

She said bravely in between her now incessant sobs, "It's okay dear, you can go. They're all here to take care of me. I'll be fine. You shouldn't worry. If you want to go it's okay."

As I glanced over to her son, I saw that he echoed her words with his tears that for the first time in his life he allowed his family to see. The dying man struggled forward a bit in his chair and from his mouth came a weak voice pleading for some type of relief. "Go, sure, but how the hell do I do it? How the hell do I do it..."

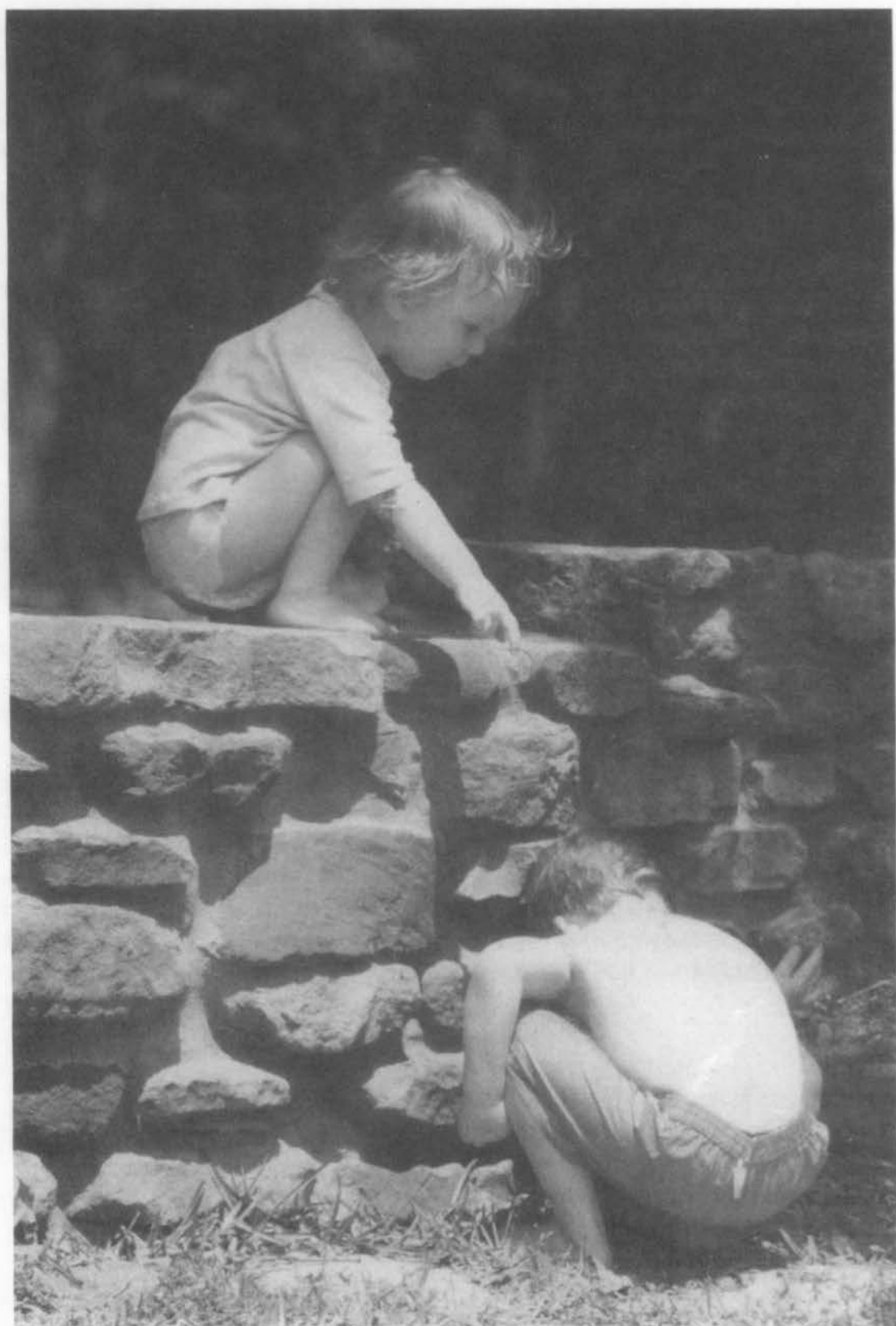
He let his head fall back upon the cushioned upper portion of the recliner and simultaneously lifted his arm to signal his wife to come closer. And as the wife stood up briefly so that she could touch her lips to her dying husband's for one last kiss, I felt a truly deep, cutting sorrow come alive within me. I watched as she leaned in, and I closed my eyelids as I listened to the faint kissing sound that they made for the world to hear. His daughter stood up and injected more morphine. I couldn't tell how much this time, and she wouldn't tell anyone the amount. For ten awful minutes we stood side by side, partners in life and now in death. Partners in crime too, because he had stopped breathing. She had injected enough to kill him. But is it really killing if he was dying anyway? Sobs permeated the confines of the house. And I came to my answer. She had just killed him, and I had silently watched.

## Heather Monasky

---

**T**he horizon narrows my visionary objects. My cat grows older.  
The world multiplies by disappointments. But the sky's still huge.  
Relief comes in the form of a hoax.  
Known religiously as God's glory.  
Known indirectly as the plight of the common man.





*Tiffany Stratton*

**Martine Natasha Johnson**

---

***The Point Around which the World Revolved***

**H**is wiry hands grip the rusted metal bars  
and he grins at me across the merry-go-round,  
flaunting the gap where a baby tooth has recently seceded.

I envy that gap, as I envy his later bedtime,  
Lego skills, and Cub Scout adventures.  
My back pressed against the sun-scorched metal,

I brace myself in the center,  
entrusting my stability to him  
and the forces of centrifusion.

He thrusts his entire weight into those first few pushes.  
"Faster!" I command, and faster he runs.  
He works so hard to make me so happy

and I selfishly absorb his unselfish love,  
lazily opening my eyes to the sky  
to watch the world revolve around me.

## Christopher Pieske

---

### *Environmental Justice*

The environmental justice movement began in 1982 in Warren County, North Carolina. Benjamin Chavis Jr., the head of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice and future head of the NAACP led protests against the siting of a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in the rural county, which was largely populated by African-Americans. From the beginning, the movement for environmental justice has been intertwined with the movement for the civil rights of minorities. This begs the question; does environmental injustice result from race (environmental racism), poverty, lack of political power, or some combination of these factors? The answer to this question will inform our choice of methods to combat environmental injustice.

Definitions of the concepts are necessary for an effective discussion of environmental justice and environmental racism. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." Sanford Jay Rosen and Tom Nolan say that the basic tenet of environmental justice is "that poor people and people of color bear a disproportionate share of our nation's environmental health hazards." Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson define environmental racism:

Environmental racism refers to any environmental policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color.

Warren Kriesel, Terence J. Centner, and Andrew G. Keeler have a slightly different definition, "[P]rejudice plus exploitation of a minority or overt discrimination based on race in an environmental context, is environmental racism."

There is little argument that environmental injustice, however one defines it, does take place in America. Studies conducted by the EPA and the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice show that poor and



minority communities bear a disproportionate environmental burden. The causes of this disproportionate burden are much in debate, however. Gloria E. Helfand and L. James Peyton offer a good summary of the situation:

The fact that minority and poor individuals are disproportionately located in areas facing environmental hazards could be due to discrimination at the time of siting, or to market dynamics that lead these groups to locate in areas that are already home to a site. In addition, minority status and poverty, themselves correlated, are often correlated with lower educational attainment and with less access to community decision-makers.

Kriesel, Centner, and Keeler agree with Bullard and Johnson that "[b]oth race and class factors place low-income and people-of-color communities at special risk." Kriesel, Centner, and Keeler further argue that environmental injustice is due to "aversive racism," which "includes unconscious action with an evident impact on a racial group but without animus." They go on to state, "[T]here is evidence of aversive racism in the sense that discrimination against poor people takes place, and the non-white population is more likely to be poor." Therefore, race and class are co-factors.

Others argue that political factors are most important:

Environmental decisions today often depend on the "squeaky wheel" principle. The best organised, best connected, and most wealthy communities squeak loudest and are attended to while the poor and disorganised remain ignored.

Environmental injustice may result from normal market decisions, as well:

[N]ormal human and market operations can be expected to create differing levels of amenities, including environmental quality, at different locales. The existence of differences in environmental quality does not per se indicate that discriminatory practices are in place; those differences might well result from informed consumer and producer decisions.

Those with the ability to move out of an environmentally hazardous area will do so. Those left behind will most likely be poor and/or minorities. Another possible factor offered by Helfand and Peyton is information. Poor and minority communities are more likely to have low levels of education. Therefore, members of those communities may not be informed enough about the dangers of their surroundings to know that there is a problem to be solved. Maribel Nicholson-Choice points to another, more personal, possibility:

[M]any plant managers do not have a relationship with neighboring communities. This detachment or gap between the facility and nearby community is fertile ground for the seeds of distrust and fear to grow in the community. This lack of trust and proliferation of fear is what fuels charges of environmental racism by community advocates when an accidental spill or other accident occurs at the facility.

Nicholson-Choice may have a point when it comes to incidents of accidental environmental harm, but I do not believe her theory holds when it comes to other incidents of environmental injustice, such as pollution that is produced by design from a chemical plant or landfill, or cleaning up asbestos or lead paint. So which of these factors (race, class, politics, markets, information, or manager-community relations) is most important? I argue that race and class are the co-factors that contribute most to environmental injustice. The problem results from a combination of all of the above-mentioned factors, but race and class are always at the base of the issue. Minority and lower-class communities are more likely to be politically weak and disorganized, have lower levels of education, and are more likely to be disadvantaged by producers' and consumers' market decisions. If race and class are the main factors contributing to environmental injustice, how do we ameliorate this problem?

There have been a number of strategies used to attempt to eliminate environmental injustice. Polluters have been sued for violations of the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination by programs receiving federal funds. These lawsuits have been largely unsuccessful, however, because the accuser must show intent to prove a violation of Title VI has occurred. This is difficult, if not impossible, if environmental justice results from aversive racism. President Clinton also tried to tackle the problem when he issued Executive Order 12898 in February 1994. This order required executive agencies to avoid inflicting disproportionate environmental damage to minority and poor communities. It also required agencies to develop environmental justice strategies.

Kriesel, Centner, and Keeler argue, and I agree, that the best way to alleviate the effects of environmental justice is to pass more stringent environmental regulations and more strictly enforce already existing standards. The fact is that environmentally hazardous chemical plants and landfills must be located somewhere. Chances are that people will live near these sites, and for reasons discussed above these people are likely to be poor and/or people of color. As Robert Wolcott, chairman of the EPA's environmental racism task force, stated, "Surprise, surprise: We have these facilities near poor people. Look back 500 years and you'll find the same thing." However, if all chemical plants and landfills are required to be safer, then

they will cause less damage, no matter where they are located. This strategy must be coupled with efforts to increase the economic conditions of poor and minority communities, as well. With greater economic stability will come higher education levels, more political clout, and the ability to hire experts and lawyers to fight for the environmental well being of all citizens. These efforts would help to eliminate the effects of environmental injustice and racism.

## Kristin Palm

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### *Your Hangover*

A barren glass bottle of Shiraz sits  
on the polished wood counter,  
the clear, blown glass filtering  
pale winter light.

The bottle is curvaceous-  
the way I felt  
when your pale hands touched  
my baroque belly.

It sits, unencumbered,  
the stained white label torn,  
the cork tinged scarlet lying lifeless  
by its side.

I was too thirsty.  
I drank it down  
in gulps like water like PowerAde  
like life like you.

The naïve drinker.  
I didn't realize I was capable  
of emptying its  
bulbous body.

The bottle's long neck  
gracefully arches like my back did  
like the connection of your collarbone  
like two ballerinas in a passion.

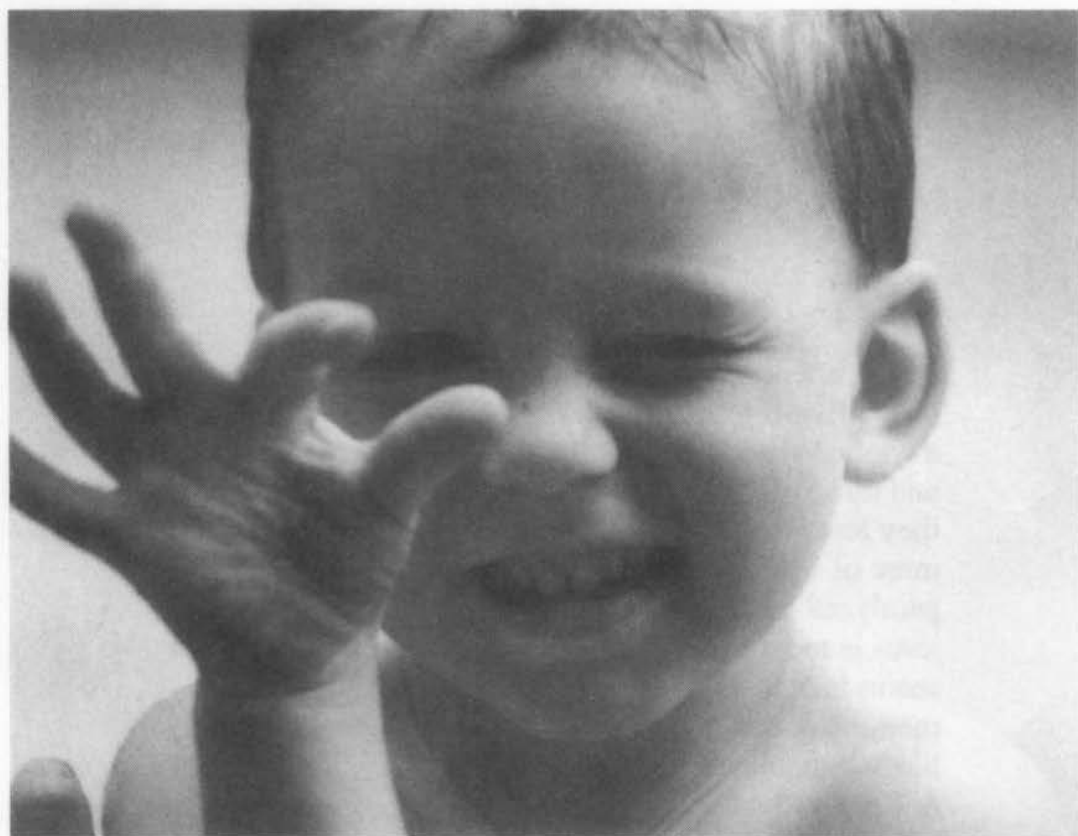
It rests, drained of its burden  
the wet, bitter liquid  
leaving a crimson droplet  
at the very bottom of its being.

An empty blown glass bottle  
resting barren on the kitchen counter  
filtering the pale winter light.

## Heather Monasky

---

j esus is a quick fix.  
he's a five-finger discount.  
a washed slate instead of the real pneumonia.  
and those radiant beams of his,  
they force me to internalize  
more of what's on his hand from the  
paralyzed inside to the baptized outside  
jesus is more a wishing bone than a proven prescription  
seems he's just the opposite of what  
mommy & daddy claim –  
like a tranquilizer he's not working.  
& I'm no Elephant.  
not like they think.  
I'm Not much Meat.



*Tiffany Stratton*

Rebecca Thoreson

---

*Waiting for Innocence to Return*

Remember as a child,  
How momma kissed hurts better?  
Or, how safe it felt in daddy's big, old sweater?  
Sharpest sticks and hardest stones never hurt with best pals beside you.  
And protecting all the little ones was the least that we could do.  
So why now has the power of a soft kiss faded?  
And a single hurtful word leaves us all feeling oh so jaded?  
Is there somewhere, someone, something to bring those feelings back?  
Or, when innocence fades, are we all more vulnerable to attack?  
There must be something that each and all of us can do to recapture the  
effect of old tattered wool or a gently kissed boo-boo.

Dear F<sub>orum</sub> Readers,

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1. Print a hard copy of your work.
2. Save it to disk as a text (.txt) file.
3. Complete a Submission Release Form.
4. Drop the above three items in a submission drop box found either in the Honors lounge or in the mailboxes.

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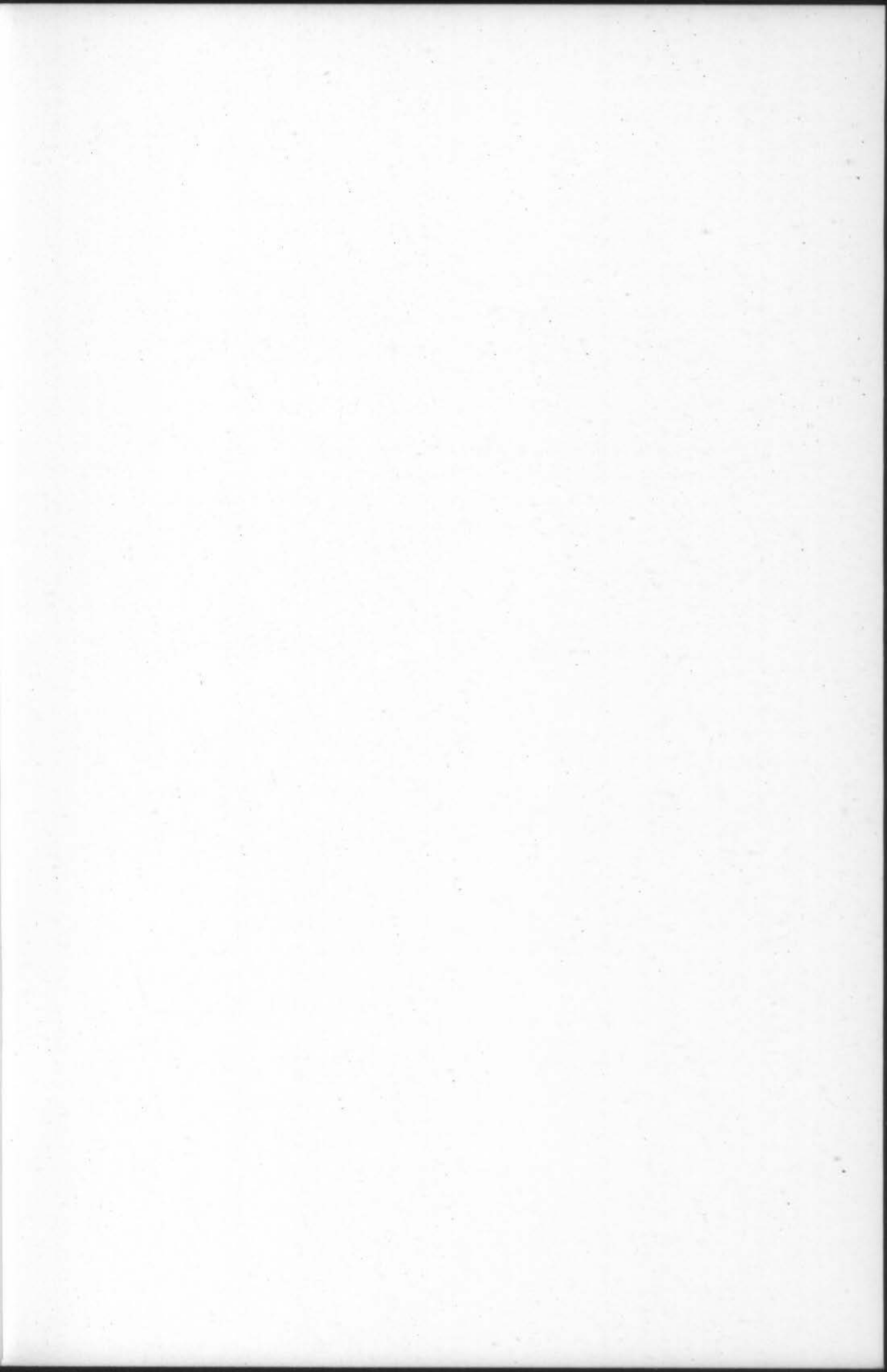
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2. Include your name and phone number on the back of your artwork.
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Thank you,

the F<sub>orum</sub> Editorial Board





# the Forum

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